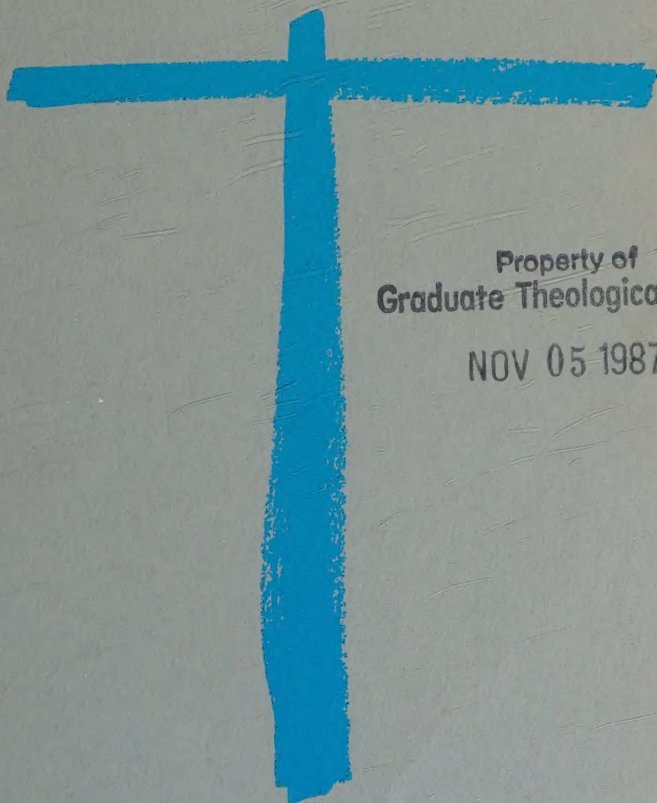


Francis and the Americas

The Franciscan



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The Society of Saint Francis

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Pax et bonum

THE FRANCISCAN

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INTO ALL THE WORLD

A new brochure about the life and work of the brothers and sisters of the Society of Saint Francis is available from The Provincial Secretary, S. Francis House, Normanby Road, Scunthorpe, South Humberside DN15 6AR.

Copies are 50p each or 10 for £4.50 (post free). For administrative reasons orders received in September and October will not be dealt with until after 1st November.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Sample sets at £1.50 are available from S. Mary's Convent, Freeland, Oxford OX7 2AJ.

CELEBRATING FRANCIS

Francistide Festival, London, 3rd October, 1987

Celebrating Francis! And we mean to celebrate!

This year the planning is being shared between the First and Third Orders and the emphasis is strongly on participation. Our festival will centre round the Eucharist, to which everyone will have an opportunity to contribute in some form or other, either making music, dancing, choral speaking, drama or artwork. The Festival is planned to last from 10.30 a.m. until 4.00 p.m., will take place at Southwark Cathedral and everyone is welcome. Details will be circulated later—please put it in your diary now so that you will be able to join us in . . . CELEBRATING FRANCIS!

DEEPER INTO GOD by Brother Ramon, S.S.F.

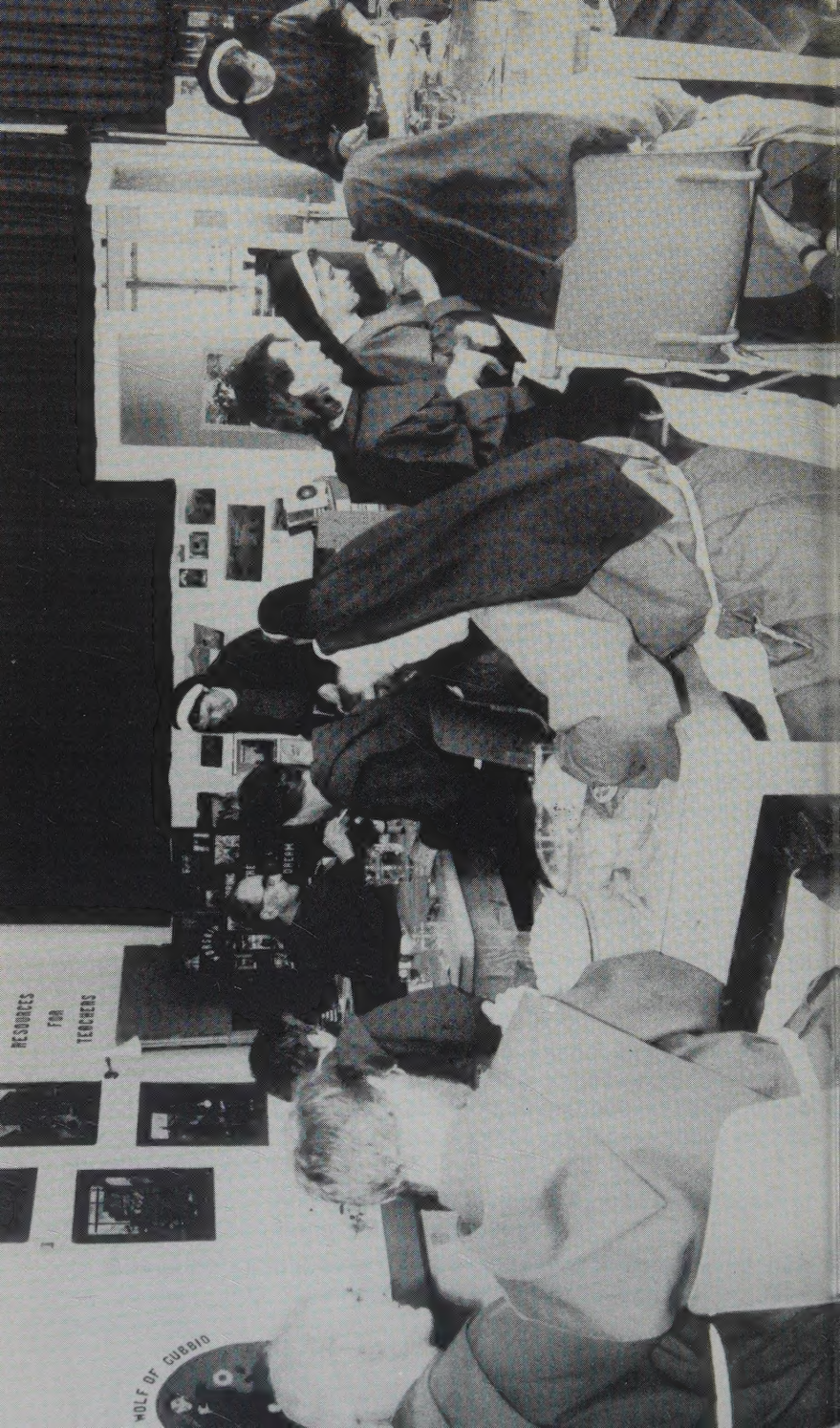
Those who have read Brother Ramon's book *A Hidden Fire*, (now in its second impression), will want to get hold of his second book, entitled *Deeper Into God*, (Marshall Pickering, trade paperback, £4.95).

It is a handbook on spiritual retreats, containing not only a great deal of information about the kinds of retreats which are available, but how to prepare, what to take, how to deal with problems, together with instruction on prayer, counselling, confession, silence, humour, and also sounding warning notes about the dangers.

There is no other book available which covers such a broad area, with a light touch, depth of devotion and theological understanding.

To look at the table of contents is to want to read the book! Publication date, August 1987, available from christian bookshops or from Glasshampton.

The members of the Southern Regional Meeting in the refectory at
Compton Durville.



Francis and the Americas



THE Franciscan Missions which brought the faith and education to California in the late 18th Century were part of a colonisation which also brought disease, war and famine; which decimated the native Indian population and stole their land. Retrospective views are illuminated by the arc lights of later research and insight; and our ideas of Christian mission have undergone great change in emphasis. It is to be hoped that what appeals to us as truly Franciscan activity today may better stand scrutiny two hundred years on.

A consumerist economy is proving to be no more beneficial to the underprivileged than was evangelism by force to the heathen, though the providence of God takes both into the redemptive process. So in this phase of the struggle, Franciscan fidelity to the gospel shows up in identification with the revolutionary liberation of Central and South America and with civil disobedience in the stand for human rights, for conservation and against arms stockpiling in the North.

Americans generally are incurable romantics, but are also renowned for their hard-headed business acumen. The friendly, joyous Saint, who tamed a wolf and preached to birds has considerable appeal; but romantics find that the encounter with Francis draws out the steel, the determination and the willingness to suffer which produces martyrs: while hardheadedness has to give way before the challenge of powerless love. Francis would have loved America!

The Minister General's Letter

Dear friends,

I.P.T.O.C.! The initials haunted me. The reality exceeded our wildest hopes. Of course it's true, the Third Order *is* International and spread over five continents—but spread in some places very thinly indeed. Bob Pope and his committee organised with unruffled calm the 'Welcome Service' at Southwark; and the hospitable brothers at Hilfield made it all seem easy. Only the weather refused to co-operate—oh the cold, and the rain! Accounts of the First Order Brothers and Sisters Chapters will be found elsewhere. After them there were three days of joint meetings with the Second and Third Order representatives, then the Third Order settled down to its business.

Writing a week later I still find it difficult to focus on the 'highlights' of all this. My mind and my emotions are still dominated by the impact of Paul Alexander's performance of St John's Gospel—which was really an added extra. This very moving monologue emerges as a sort of divine dialogue, or prolonged meditation. The echoing cry 'Lazarus come forth', with the undeniable power of resurrection, seemed to be summing up all that our Chapters were trying to say. There was a lot about resurrection, renewal, liberation, underlying our talks, discussions, decisions.

In a way that I find difficult to define it seemed as if a new creative power was at work among the Brothers and Sisters, a deeper understanding of relationships, a greater readiness to accept our vulnerability, even our fragility. The hard realities of reorganisation, constitutions, reform and acceptance of responsibility had about them the breath of new life almost of being reborn.

And there were other encounters: Tony Hall-Matthews, who travels over his remote Australian outback diocese in a light plane; the charming Father Lalit Kundu, from Calcutta, who observed it all; the indomitable Dee Dobson with her shrewd insights and motherly concern, from Miami; and then the African Third Order delegation, two black and one white saying something about the pain of apartheid, but demonstrating the love and mutual respect which overcomes it.

I had met only one of them before, Elijah Masuko, twenty years ago in Bulawayo. Now he is the Bishop of the new diocese of Manicaland, just six years old. Manicaland? Yes, one of the four diocese of Zimbabwe, on

the border of Mozambique with all that implies at present. It has nearly four hundred congregations spread all over the territory. And Priests? Only *eleven* full-time and a few non-stipendary or retired! So there is a very heavy emphasis on the role of the laity and, compared with the almost spiritually indulgent world in which some of us live, there are congregations which receive the sacraments only once a year!

And there are other human problems. During the war of liberation they suffered the worst church property destruction. Now there is the problem of refugees pouring in from Mozambique and South Africa.

At this time of the year we think of pilgrimages to Assisi, Jerusalem, and other holy shrines with coaches, guides, holy water and holy Masses. Elijah, speaking to the Third Order Chapter on 'Franciscan Simplicity' said, 'Last year we went on a pilgrimage to Mozambique. The scale of human suffering like elsewhere in the world is very depressing, and the powers that be, incapable of changing the situation. People are starving to death. Every kind of disease, poverty, ignorance, is very rife, caused not only by drought or natural disasters but mostly by human fault. We talk of simplicity as an attitude of mind and a quality of human spirit which refuses to allow external forces... to control us. We say it means travelling light, what does it mean to people who are travelling, carrying the agony of those sufferings?... They share the agony of hunger and death while we share 'what' with them?' I hope his whole talk (and the others) will be published.

For Elijah this is all on his doorstep, a challenge to his love and to his Franciscan vocation. It was not the only challenge we were given, but it sticks with me like the warmth of his laugh, the integrity of his smile and—'Lazarus come forth'.

Terry, talking of 'Liberation' said, almost as a throw-away line, 'There are no victims, only volunteers'. I remember that, and also some words from one of the leading British speakers confronted with the E.E.C. scandal of over-production, and aid for the Third World, 'Don't send us your surplus, send us your sons!' How do we follow up our experience? A suggestion: Are there volunteers among our Third Order priests who would raise the money in their parish to go for a three months sabbatical to Manicaland? Elijah says that the awareness that you cared enough to go would be incalculable. Get yourself there and he will feed and house you. You won't put it all right, but there is a lot to learn, to bring back to your people. Just to go and 'stand alongside', visit

some of those remote congregations, discover for yourself what it means truly to be travelling. Go as a pilgrim.

We may be small in numbers and widely scattered, but the First Order Brothers and Sisters are beginning to discover what such a solidarity in love might mean. The Third Order might well discover it too, and Africa is not the only place.

Jesus said to the disciples, 'Who do men say that I am?' and they replied, 'Elijah, or one of the prophets'. It may be that when the many many words spoken by all the three orders at the Chapter have been read again we shall know that some prophetic voices spoke to us, raising our sights, our hopes, our expectations and renewing our vision as a Franciscan family.

God bless you
Yours affectionately

+ Michael ~~SSF~~

Minister General

Mending a Vase

When this antique vase
smashed, you stopped us
sweeping the pieces away.

It was impossible, but you kept
even slivers
and held in your head
always over the broken heap
a lovely vision.

Your patience
recreated a marvel,
the spiderweb cracks
visible only inside.

I honour such skill.
It is like love
restoring a broken spirit
surviving innumerable scars.

SUSAN FISHER

Chronicle

Brother Anselm writes:

EUROPEAN PROVINCE There are forty-something cathedrals in England, I believe, some of them purpose-built and others conversions of parish churches. In two of the latter kind there have just been occasions of significance in the life of the Society of Saint Francis—one event in the life of the whole society, the other in that of our province.

On a golden Saturday in June members of our three orders met in Southwark cathedral for Eucharist and fellowship. We had come from Australia, USA, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, the Solomon Islands, South Africa, the UK and Zimbabwe—an International A to Z—and at the offering of the bread and wine the members of the First Order Brothers' and Sisters' Chapters and of the Third Order Interprovincial Chapter were called by name to the front of the nave—in which there was not an empty seat—to be welcomed by the assembled sisters, brothers, tertiaries, companions and friends of our province. This was more than an imaginative gesture—a sort of ecclesiastical reception—it proved also to be a well-staged, effective, (expensive) teaching aid. Nobody present can ever forget that SSF is nothing less than the whole of it, or hear the news from South Africa, San Francisco, Calcutta, Auckland, Miami etc., without the knowledge that they are our brothers and sisters.

On a radiant Sunday in July brothers and sisters of SSF were present in a packed Birmingham Cathedral for the ordination to the diaconate of Brother Malcolm, after his two years of preparation at the Queen's College. Like all ordinations this had more than personal significance—a person is not just ordained as if somehow to affect his/her status; he or she remains the child of God—for ordination is *to* a specific ministry in the body of Christ. Malcolm is to assist the priest-in-charge of S. Michael's, Handsworth (Brother David Columba, SSF). As is made explicit in the service of licensing and welcome, this is not simply the inauguration of the ministry of two clergymen in an urban priority area. It is something brought about by the decision of the provincial Chapter and marks a step along the road of response on the part of SSF, to the plight of the many trapped in hopelessness and deprivation by the relentless processes of the free-market economy, or in language we can understand, by human greed. Please pray for them in their work and witness and for the life of the sisters at Wellclose House and the brothers

at S. Francis House in Birmingham and for the young people in their care.

It is all too easy to be critical of the institutional church, for example, to remind ourselves that a hundred years elapsed between the explosion of population in the industrial centres of Britain and the creation of such dioceses as Southwark and Birmingham. Our criticism should, however, spur us on, for *we* are the church. May the work of Malcolm and David Columba be seen as one of many instances where SSF is seen to be identified with Christian activity and prayer in today's world, and to sit lightly to rules and regulations when these have outlived their usefulness and serve to quench the Spirit (We don't normally run parishes).

In a much wider context, the First Order Chapters, by a decision made at the June meeting, look forward to the day when it will be possible to welcome groups from other cultures to SSF who will share our allegiance to our Principles—the foundation document which came to us from India and defines the spirit of SSF—but will have their own rules about structure and organisation rather than our Constitution. My prayer is that this will make possible what we tried to bring about in Tanzania, only to fail in the attempt—an African response to the call of God to Franciscan religious life in the Anglican Communion.

Cathedrals should be places of vision, like Isaiah's temple. The above paragraphs attempt to describe the glimpses we had in two of them recently. Ultimately, the Christian vision too is of the God who says 'Whom shall we send, and who will go for us?' Those questions are implicit in any vision of the international, intercultural Society of Saint Francis as they are in the vision of run-down urban Britain. Let us all, as God calls us, make Isaiah's reply our own—'Here am I, send me'.

PACIFIC ISLANDS PROVINCE — SOLOMON ISLANDS REGION

Brother Giles writes:

When I last wrote I finished the article by saying that we were about to make a plan to move from Alangaula to a site on west Guadalcanal. On May 21 at 6.00 p.m. in pouring rain the church ship Southern Cross arrived at Alangaula and we began the task of loading building and other materials onto the ship. It was a pitch black night and there was a cyclone somewhere around which was responsible for all the rain. It only eased up for one short period during the evening and during that time we were able to load the thirty or more cardboard cartons containing our library books. It took seven hours altogether to get

everything we had ready on board and at one o'clock in the morning we sailed for Honiara. At 5.30 a.m. the ship nearly capsized when it was struck by two large waves but the weight of the materials we had loaded gave the ship enough weight not to roll too far. The same cyclone was responsible for the heavy seas, and although we had had a difficult night trying to sleep we were all so tired that the movement of the ship was hardly noticed!

Since then life has been very busy for those of us in the 'moving' party and it is difficult to remember what we did when. However we have spent three weeks living in Maravovo village, about forty minutes walk from our site, and from there have succeeded in clearing the bush and large trees from the site, getting all the material we have brought from Alangaula onto the site, building a temporary shelter for the material and to use as a workshop during the building operation, and getting plans drawn up and submitted for planning permission. We hope that the plans will be approved this coming week and that we can start building the week after. Tomorrow we move to temporary accommodation at a church training centre which is only about ten minutes walk from the site, so we will be much closer and life will be much easier. We are employing a skilled carpenter to be the foreman for the work and we will provide the labour. Friends have been very kind in helping us in many ways, from transport to drawing up plans, and this has enabled us to get as much done as we have. We think that the whole project will take us about a year to complete, provided that we have enough funds to keep building, and I hope that by the end of September all the Hautambu brothers will be living on the site.

We are going to call the friary La Verna Friary. We hadn't made any particular plan for a name, but one evening when three of us were walking along the road towards Hautambu, which is a steep sided ridge, it occurred to us that it should be La Verna. We hope that it will be a place of prayer and spiritual growth for our brothers and other people as well. We will keep the Stigmata as our festival. We plan to dedicate the chapel to All Souls. This may seem a strange dedication but there is a particular reason for it. In the past (and to a certain extent the present) thinking of the people of the islands of Guadalcanal, Gela, South Malaita and parts of Makira, Hautambu is the first resting place of departed souls. When a person dies then the soul goes first to Hautambu and then proceeds down the weather coast of Guadalcanal until it reaches an island at the eastern end of the island called Marapa. There the souls of the departed live on, a sort of paradise. Hautambu itself

means the place of the 'holy' (tambu, taboo) bamboos (hau, in the local language). There are indeed bamboos growing there, they are a kind much favoured for making fishing rods. The address of the new friary will be La Verna Friary, Hautambu, P.O. Box 519, Honiara. We will share the post office box of Patteson House, but we are in fact about thirty five miles west of the town. Those of us who are there already experience a sense of freedom that we never experienced on Ugi. It is wonderful to be able to make a plan to go to Honiara and get there in just over an hour. No more of the frustrations of waiting for a ship to come sometime!

Meanwhile there are still eight novices, postulants and aspirants at Alangaula. They are dismantling one of our long accommodation buildings and we hope to ship that in the middle of July. Then in August we will move the rest of our furniture, the diesel generator, and our other things. By the end of August we should have completed the move and it will be good to have all the brothers together again at Hautambu. As you can imagine it is not easy to maintain the pattern and discipline of our normal life at present, but we do what we can and look forward to the time in the not too distant future when we will be able to re-establish our life. Meanwhile we learn a great deal from our present circumstances and in particular we experience the wonderful providence of God as difficulties and obstacles are overcome.

There is not a great deal of news from the rest of the Region. This is because the life of the brothers at Patteson House and at Auki is going well. We look forward to the first visit of our new Minister Provincial, Brother Randolph, in July, after his visit to England. During his visit our four postulants will be clothed as novices and there are another four young men to be admitted as postulants. Providing that we have got on well with the building at Hautambu there are another four men to come as postulants at the beginning of next year. We already feel the benefits of our move from Alangaula to Hautambu and we look forward to a continued growth and development in the Region.

SAN FRANCISCO (The Community of Saint Francis)

Sister Cecilia writes:

Susanne Elizabeth re-affirmed her vows in First Profession and we welcomed Hannah Peter to the novitiate.

Jean, Pamela Clare and I attended FOSC and the other meetings at Hilfield in the summer (the what??!) It was an inspiration to be with

sisters and brothers from all parts of the world and to experience the unity and diversity of our Franciscan family.

Please pray especially for Catherine Joy and Hannah Peter who are leaving S. Francis House to work among migrant (mainly Spanish-speaking) farming people in Brentwood, California. 'El Centro' is not a new establishment in the diocese but it does present new and exciting challenges to our sisters.

Peace and love in our Lord.

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND PROVINCE

Brother Daniel writes:

Whenever we go on a pastoral visit to a parish one of the questions we are asked is: What is the difference between a friar and a monk? The reply is usually: Friars move about while monks stay in their monasteries. The last few months were certainly a time of moving about in this province, not just Bruce Paul, Leo Anthony and Daniel to the UK for the First Order Brothers' Chapter. Leo Anthony went off to the Solomons for the Melanesian Brotherhood Great Conference and to do some teaching. Barnabas and Alphaeus returned with Leo after fifteen months in Auckland, the many farewells showing what a big place they had won in people's hearts. The Friary at Auckland was empty except for Damian Kenneth, with all the brothers away on camps, at schools or in parishes. D.K. who works at the Missions to Seamen was busy there and at S. Paul's, Symonds Street.

Meanwhile in Brisbane the friary moved—well, the brothers moved—out of Brookfield, a move we were all sure was right, but it proved to be more of a wrench than we expected. We have taken a house temporarily sixteen doors further up Arthur Street from The Franciscan Place. Bruce Paul, Noel Thomas and Milton were only there a short while before moving on to do a parish locum in Millmerran in the diocese of Brisbane. The move from Brookfield among other reasons was to be more urban.

Meanwhile the family at Stroud was increasing with Geoffrey Adam and Alfred joining Brian and Francis. We now see Stroud as being the stable, visible centre of our Franciscan life in Australia, the place where novices will begin life in our community.

The next move was Chapter in Auckland, a time when we looked at our life and work. It was decided that James Francis be transferred to Brisbane in July for further experience and to help in the work of

building up our life in Australia. He will be joining Alan Barnabas, Milton and Alfred in Perth, into which Bruce Paul will fly in from Europe and where we will run seven pastoral visits and Bruce will help in spirituality workshops.

Wayne, Howard and Geoffrey Adam had asked Chapter to let them form a rural community. In order to do this Wayne and Howard have been released from our Society and Geoffrey Adam is on leave of absence. We wish them well and assure them of our prayers.

William continues to work in the Trinity Centre in Brisbane and is based at The Franciscan Place. It is hoped all the brothers will be under one roof soon. As I write the brothers in New Zealand, Masseo, Vincent and Christopher John, with Sister Noel, are completing a pastoral visit in the South Island.

So, you see, a friar does move around.

FREELAND The photo of Sister Gwenda Mary reproduced in this issue was taken about three months before her death on Jan 2 1987, when she was eighty two. It conveys something of the gallant spirit with which she had always faced life. She was a founding member of the Community of S. Clare, and was our mother for fourteen years. Frequent ill health seemed only to strengthen her determination to give herself completely to fulfil her vocation. She died as she had lived, insisting that she must join the community at the Eucharist that morning. Every day she had hoped and waited for the coming of her Lord and though we miss her sadly, we can only rejoice that He came so gently for her. Surely now her faithfulness is fulfilled in joy, and we remember her with great thankfulness.

Inspiration

For some time Paul Alexander has, quite literally, been spreading the Gospel in this country and overseas, in theatres, churches and open-air venues. This extraordinary one-man recital is of superb quality.

A reviewer wrote of it: The narration was majestic in its simplicity. Considerable depth was dramatically achieved as some of the more profound passages were interwoven by occasional throw-away lines which, by that technique, acquired even deeper shades of meaning; the familiar miracles became more impressive by the casual manner of their treatment. But it was not in the miracles so much as in Christ's everyday contacts with the people that the scriptures came most thrillingly alive, in a remarkable unity of the spiritual and the material.

Dressed casually as though for a friendly chat, his rendering of the most poetic gospel is an experience long to remember. At least, a staggering feat of memory; at most, an inspired and inspiring performance. Paul expects to be taking it on tour again in March and April 1988.

St. Elizabeth's, Bushwick Ave.

BY BROTHER JOHN GEORGE S.S.F.



DRIVING in the Parkway the seventy miles from Little Portion (where the friars have been since the twenties) to Brooklyn, you wouldn't know that you were driving by eight million people. The road is lined with beautiful trees and shrubs. As you approach Brooklyn, you would notice some abandoned and stripped cars. The violence of this might jar you.

Of the eight million people, about two million are black. The rest are Italian, Greek, Jewish, Chinese, Irish, Puerto Rican, WASP (white anglo saxon protestant), Polish, etc. Some of the world's wealthiest people live not far from this road. People live largely in groups. Wealthy in one place, white in one place, Hispanic in one place, and black in another. In fact you can travel by bus from S. Elizabeth's for a full hour and not see a white face. White people don't seem to live among black people.

Black and white people work together. Usually in the pyramid at work skin color gets lighter as you approach the decision making and visa versa. But whites and blacks don't live together, socialize together, or worship together. The law requires that they must go to school together. That is if you don't send your kids to private school.

Most white people are convinced it is not safe in black neighbourhoods. 'Be careful'. 'Don't stop your car'. 'Don't go there'. And it is true that things do happen. Drugs are sold, as they are in every American shopping center. People involved with drugs get hurt. Also there is less police protection; things do happen. The neighborhood looks bad. There are many abandoned buildings and vacant lots. There is an ongoing debate as to whether blacks are permitted to live in these neighborhoods because of the declining condition of the housing stock or if the neighborhood has declined as a result of their moving in. But there is no doubt that property values are lower in neighborhoods where whites don't live.

It would be fair to say that relations between blacks and whites are not really good in New York. In the last eighteen months there have been six major incidents that have raised tension, the most shocking being a gang of white teenagers chasing three black men into a freeway. One of the black men was killed.

When three friars moved to Bushwick four years ago, people (white) expressed the conviction that white people couldn't live in that neighborhood. The brothers said the Lord was our shepherd. At first we found it difficult. The scene was ugly, abandoned cars, vacant lots covered with garbage, burned out buildings.

People generally are pretty defensive. They don't speak to one another and they look at others with distrust. I think we encountered some sin in our own attitudes. When we were the only white person on the subway car at night, we felt afraid. But we soon discovered friends who laugh, raise children, go to work, live their lives. We began to relax.

People who live in the neighborhood also believe the mythology that their neighborhood is a jungle. People are afraid to walk the streets, especially at night. They never open their doors to an unexpected guest. 'Call first'. Early on we were given a pamphlet from a community organization announcing that Bushwick has the highest crime rate in the world.

The brothers, maybe because we are resurrection people and have little to lose, walked the streets. We, of course, discovered others who share this folly. I remember walking home from a bible study with a woman in her seventies at eleven thirty p.m. She had long ago decided that she was not going to be a prisoner in her apartment.

If the streets are deserted of course they are safer for those who do not want their activities observed. The myth of violence is much more damaging than the actual violence. It keeps hundreds of thousands of people prisoners in their own homes. The press must bear tremendous responsibility for this. Resurrection people have a real vocation here for we know that no real harm can come to us by the actions of another. We are therefore free to walk.

We found in Brooklyn a very vibrant church. At least half the black skin people in Brooklyn come from the West Indies; they have been Anglicans for three, five, or eight generations. There are thirty-nine parishes in Brooklyn. Twenty-five of them are mostly black. Earlier I said that black and whites don't worship together. Black Americans are mostly Baptist, Methodist or Pentecostal. They worship in the black churches. Whites don't worship in the Black Churches any more than they live in black neighborhoods. The Episcopal Church has a tremendous opportunity. We have within this one Diocese significant congregations of black and white members.

The brothers have been in the diocese for over fifty years. We have many friends. In coming to Brooklyn we hope to extend our friendships into the black community, and we hope to find ways to introduce our friends to each other. The Episcopal Church had the opportunity of taking the lead in building the peaceable kingdom in our city.

Now in case this situation does not seem complex enough, one third of our neighbors are Hispanic. In many ways everything I have said about black-white relations applies to white-hispanic relations. The relationship between blacks and Hispanic is quite different but equally complex and pretty tense. Brother David Jardine for the last two years has been starting a Hispanic parish in our neighborhood.

In Christ there is no Jew or Greek, Black or White, male or female, English or Spanish. A good friend of mine, Thomas Berry, who is a cultural historian, says: 'this American experiment of bringing together people of different races, religions, cultures and languages is very interesting. But it will be another couple of hundred years before we will know if it will work'. In God's Kingdom it does work.

! This is good news. We need to proclaim it. In the world of human sin, people were brought, stacked in rows in the holds of English and American ships, to this new world against their will. This is not easily forgotten. Thomas Berry's statement indicates that the future of America depends on how our multi-racial culture matures. The gospel has much to offer in helping us work out this. Confession of past sins is a good starting place and then working to rebuild the human relationships that are available to us.

The friary on Bushwick Avenue is an attempt to proclaim God's Kingdom.

S.S.F. in San Francisco

BY SISTER PAMELA CLARE C.S.F.



THE SISTERS and Brothers are very much present in the City of S. Francis—San Francisco, California. The Brothers opened San Damiano Friary in 1971 and three years later the Sisters arrived from England to start S. Francis House. The two houses are situated in the 'Mission District', an area in the heart of the city named for its proximity

to the original Franciscan Mission of San Francisco de Asis (commonly known as Mission Dolores). Our neighborhood is a very diverse one, with a wide variety of languages, cultures, races, ages, and lifestyles, and our ministries as Franciscans reflect that diversity as we live and work with the people of our neighborhood, our city, and our diocese. Our ministries have changed as needs have changed over the last sixteen years. Also, as the locus of the First Year Novice Program (a joint program of the Sisters and Brothers), San Damiano Friary has seen a steady stream of new novices every year, each with his own skills and concerns.

A major focus of our work in San Francisco has been related to caring for the sick. Several Brothers and Sisters have worked at five different San Francisco hospitals in nursing and chaplaincy. Nursing home visitation and practical support care (providing meals, shopping, cleaning, lifting, helping with medications, and 'just being around') for the elderly and incapacitated have continually been an important part of our work. With the AIDS crisis, which has hit our city very hard, Sisters and Brothers have become involved in the Shanti Project, a counseling and practical support program for persons with AIDS. The Family Link, a program offering accommodations and support for out-of-town family and friends of persons with AIDS, arose from the recognition of a real need by a Franciscan Sister and the consequent hard work needed to make that dream a reality.

San Francisco has its share of 'street people', those folks who panhandle tourists, sleep in doorways, and form long, ragged lines at soup kitchens. Brothers and Sisters have offered emergency accommodations, worked at soup kitchens and shelters, on crisis phone lines, at alcohol counseling centers, and with the Night Ministry, which sends ministers out to be friendly listeners and to provide information and referral to all the varied people who find themselves on the streets late at night. The prisoners at the San Francisco Jail and the seafarers in the Port of the Golden Gate have reason to be familiar with the brown habit of the Franciscan Brothers and Sisters who have visited and counseled them over the last eight years.

Another area of work in which the Sisters have continuously been involved in one way or another has been ministering to the needs of immigrants and refugees. In the 1970's, the San Francisco area was flooded with refugees fleeing the warfare in Southeast Asia and, in the 1980's, refugees are coming in great numbers from the war-torn

countries of Central America. The Sisters have taught English, tutored children, helped provide basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, jobs), worked to nurture spirituality and worship among traumatized peoples, and have been advocates for those 'illegal aliens' whose right to political asylum has been consistently denied by the Reagan administration.

The Brothers are well-known for their work as managers of the diocesan retreat and conference center (The Bishop's Ranch) for ten years. Although they no longer run the Ranch, the retreat work of the Brothers and Sisters continues in the form of leading quiet days and retreats, working as spiritual directors, on 'cursillo' teams, providing hospitality to guests in our houses, and offering the 'Home Retreat' program, which provides thirty day at-home retreats four times a year.

We have been active in local parishes in many capacities—as clergy assistants, parish secretaries, multi-purpose volunteers, with prayer groups and women's groups, in music ministry and Christian education. On the diocesan level, we have participated in adult education and spiritual nurture through the Lay Academy and The School for Deacons, and have served on several diocesan committees such as the Hunger Commission and the Lambeth 1988 Sub-Committee on Christianity and the Social Order.

We are a small group of sixteen to eighteen Brothers and Sisters in the Diocese of California, but we do get around! As Franciscans we are committed to an active ministry in the world and San Francisco is a place of great need and with many opportunities. However, in the midst of all this active outside involvement, the heart of our life remains our individual and corporate prayer and worship. San Damiano Friary and S. Francis House are places of prayer in the middle of the noisy, busy, very secular city. Our morning and evening offices are accompanied by the sound of rush hour traffic going to and from work. Our hymns are in competition with car horns, police sirens, and angry arguments. We cannot fail to be continually conscious of our call as intercessors and reconcilers.

George Lyward

Jeremy Harvey of Obridge House, Obridge Road, Taunton TA2 7QA is doing extensive research on George Lyward of Finchden Manor, whom he believes to be a major figure in modern education. He would be glad to hear from anyone who knew him or can give any help.

Nicaragua Observed

From the letters of a visiting Sister



EASTER Sunday was an exuberant, joyful day of celebration beginning with a beautiful sunrise choral Eucharist at S. Mark's and climaxed by the jubilant Easter procession, which was in two parts. One part carried the statue of Mary who was looking for her son, the other part, a statue of the Risen Christ. A little girl dressed as an angel and a little boy dressed as Peter were carried back and forth, running to join the two parts of the procession. They met at the corner in front of our house with a burst of fireworks and sky rockets and a rousing chorus of 'Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!' with Easter words. The procession then went on to the Cathedral where it entered with more fireworks and an Easter hymn to the tune 'When the Saints Go Marching In!' for the Easter Mass.

Holy Week in Nicaragua is also a major holiday time. Schools, government offices, businesses, markets are closed from Wednesday until Easter Monday. Even newspapers are not published during this time. Besides all of the religious observances, it is also a time for picnics and trips to beaches and resorts. For Nicaraguans, it is the last big holiday of 'summer' (the dry season) before the 'winter' rains begin in May. There was a certain amount of tension on the Coast for fear that the Contra would take advantage of the holidays to attempt an attack. Fortunately that did not materialize.

Daily life in Nicaragua continues to be a joy and a challenge, as people struggle with the hardships caused by war and a radically changing social system. Some days I think I understand and observe so much, other days I wonder if I comprehend anything at all. People are tired of suffering and struggling, of shortages and rising prices. But there continues to be an amazing energy and strength of purpose that keeps the revolutionary process moving forward. The sense of national pride and hope for the future continues to be a powerful motivating force. The crisis of the economy is escalating here as everywhere else in Latin America. This week there has been another round of rising prices and wages. But the wages can't keep up. Life continues with an amazing amount of ingenuity and determination. There continues to be a lively debate over issues and processes, and virtually everyone has an opinion and doesn't hesitate to make it heard—on radio talk shows, letter to the editor, in taxis or in the local bar.

Life in Managua seems so calm and ordinary that it always comes as a shock to be reminded of the war that goes on relentlessly, funded openly or clandestinely by the U.S. government. This week's papers reported the grim statistics for the month of March: 426 combative actions, 425 'Contra' casualties, 117 deaths in the Nicaraguan military, 34 violations of Nicaraguan airspace, 33 terrorists actions against civilian populations, resulting in 41 civilians dead, 25 wounded and 64 kidnapped. So goes the 'low intensity war', that is bleeding the life from this country.

There is optimism over military successes against the Contra, but the senseless and cowardly acts of terrorism against civilians in the rural areas continue as the Contra desperately try to prove their viability to acquire more military aid. Typical of these was the attack on an unarmed barge carrying food to Bluefields just a day before I left. It was burned, and the crew members, including a S. Mark's parishioner, were kidnapped. It was still smoldering when our passenger boat passed it.

Please continue to keep this small, determined country in your prayers, and pray that a peaceful solution to the Central American crisis will be supported by all governments involved. Please pray, too, for the Anglican Church in Nicaragua as it moves toward maturity and autonomy, and for its Bishop, Sturdie Downs.

Glimpses of Change

BY SISTER ELIZABETH C.S.F.



IF WE VISIT a place, a country, another continent, year by year, some events and data become impressed upon the memory; and often almost sub-consciously, we find ourselves comparing what *was* with what *is*, drawing conclusions, noticing trends, evaluating and interpreting changing conditions and behaviours.

Thus, in visiting San Francisco annually for a dozen years, with a couple of trips to New York, one to Los Angeles and stop-overs to Boston, Chicago and various other places briefly during flights, I found myself clocking up apparently unconnected data. I observed, for instance that cars, noticeably very grand in comparison with ours in 1974, were generally smaller ten years later; that among the people with

whom I was acquainted, some have recently become vegetarian or tee-total and others were eating conspicuously less than the gargantuan meals previously considered the norm. Such observations appear superficial but may well be evidence of a change of heart and attitude which I see as part of a continuing dialogue between affluent complacent people, satiated with goods, and the spirit which drove a little man in Assisi in the thirteenth century to the lengths of sanctity.

Americans, on the whole, are incurable romantics and as such are moved by the unusual, the impossible, the contradictions and above all the ideals which come at them unsuspecting at every turn. Francis' uncompromising stand for the poor challenged his own country in his time and continues to do so in every country at any time, never more so than the present; and people are still being moved to radical conversion and a new way of life. the move away from conspicuous consumption, the growth of concern for the marginalized, the willingness to lose power and become vulnerable alongside others are heartening signs in a competitive world.

San Francisco, like New York, Chicago, New Orleans and other great American cities for their different reasons, attracts all comers. There, it is partly because of the moderate, predictable and mostly sunny climate; and probably more because not only is the city cosmopolitan but it is that place *par excellence*, known world-wide for tolerating the latest trends, protests, movements and epidemics. It has absorbed the hippy and flower-power cultures; given refuge to drug-addicts and drop-outs; espoused the causes of the gay/lesbian scene and now burns with compassion for those hit by the AIDS catastrophe. Because, too, just across the bay is Berkeley with its university and a concentration of Catholic theologians, the experiences, the joys, growing pains and sufferings of humanity exposed in the wicked city become rapidly the subject for discussion, digestion, statement and proclamation: the patterns of this city become a vanguard followed generally in communication across the United States.

So my ears and eyes have over the years been bombarded with data, some recorded mentally, others tucked away into my subconscious, facts which present themselves as fleeting visions when other stimuli evoke them. I think of meals in a Chinese restaurant—very cheap, touching off the memory of another meal eaten in the Sisters' house and given by a Vietnamese family, which took them all day to prepare. There we had a symbol of the love and care which went into each detail of a

varied but simple menu and a reminder also of the need, in the third world countries, to make a very little go a long way and to make it nourishing and, if possible, attractive. I think too of shopping in the Mission district where the fruit and vegetables grown by immigrant farmers who live on the breadline are half the price of those 'in town'; or of finding fascinating handmade souvenirs, real jade, real silk, in Chinatown, the work of sweated labour and exploitation of the people of Taiwan and other South East Asian countries; or of admiring the handicraft and needlework of items from Mexico or Bolivia and wondering whether the people who made these beautiful things earned enough to live on. My mind jumps immediately to craft shops on Fisherman's Wharf where well-to-do and leisured people sell similar (albeit exquisite) goods for fabulous prices.

Besides these I recall visiting and helping to dish out bowls of soup at S. Anthony's dining room run by Roman Catholic Franciscans, one of the places where San Francisco's two thousand homeless are fed daily; I remember young people lying in the streets of the famous 'tenderloin' area; also waiting with considerable nervousness at a bus stop in the black ghetto during a time of hostility towards the whites. In contrast there was the experience of a millionaire's elegant home, with a background of antiques and silver and piped music and with more than all my wants anticipated; or hearing a spoilt child in a department store whining for an expensive toy and seeing his demand gratified by a doting parent who didn't have to think of the cost.

The consciences of American people as of other affluent nations are, without doubt, being touched and moved by these evidences of the enormous and widening gap between rich and poor; and the message of S. Francis, attractive always because of its challenge, validity and timelessness, is finding a response in changing attitudes and lifestyles, in a willingness to stand up and be counted and in the various protest movements concerned with adjusting the imbalance.

A few years ago I listened to a young married couple explaining how they had decided, on principle, that they would have no children, because they felt it wrong to bring them into a world where nuclear disaster seemed imminent, or where the supply of resources was expected to become insufficient. Other people spoke to me of the need to find protection and means of survival. From such 'insular' views the emphasis over the last few years has become more outward-looking, initially perhaps because it is now recognised that survival has to be global and cannot be unilateral.

During and since the Vietnam war, many people were angry or upset because their own men were drafted. In time, these feelings have shifted for some to a political awareness and need to protest, coupled with the urgent desire to help in alleviating distress in South-East Asia and by receiving refugees. There has been, too, a curious admixture of the urgency for survival and self-protection with the growing awareness and care of others which a multi-racial society demands, so that the seeds of Franciscan ideals of brother and sisterhood, of reverence for creation, and of working for peace have found receptive soil in which to grow.

We might regard with cynicism a propensity for enthusiasms and causes, but as an ingredient in the multiplying of groups and societies making demonstrations for justice or for conservation no doubt God uses all our mixed motives and our national or personal characteristics.

More and more people are becoming aware of the immorality of arms stockpiling or of enormous consumption of food by a small proportion of the world's population at the expense of the majority who starve or live at subsistence level. Also, America has been foremost in the debates on womens' issues and the feminist movement has waxed strong. In the first place women made the push for equality and endeavoured to show at every level that they could do what any man may do, and better! Ten years ago a hefty look and an unnervingly efficient manner prevailed. More recently the return to frills and long hair was noticeable, a proclamation of the feminine and pointing up of differences between and complementarity of the sexes. And this has served to waken conscience in respect of the real oppression of women in other cultures and indeed, to broadening the whole outlook, to a realization of oppression in terms of rich and poor, of affluent and emergent nations.

The Franciscan influence is there to see, whether obvious or not. Of the several thousands of Roman Catholic Franciscans of six or seven major religious orders and the Secular Order of Franciscans (equivalent to our Third Order) and thousands more of Associates, many have responded to calls for Justice and Peace, by demonstrating at nuclear sites and by civil disobedience involving penalty. Others have taken up the bishops' pastoral letter 'Economic Justice for All', though sometimes with outspoken criticism of its moderation, by becoming more involved in teaching Christian values and in spreading understanding of the need for international policy changes. Still others have researched and made public the scandals of land pollution, exploitation of resources and chemical contamination of various localities which

endanger the health of human beings and animals. Political awareness is forming everywhere and many friars and sisters are engaged in mission in Central and South America, taking on themselves the deprivations and the dangers there. They have so far identified with the position of the poor and oppressed in those countries that many have been imprisoned, interrogated, tortured and brutally murdered, and in some cases have just disappeared.

Our little Anglican Franciscan involvements seem minute by comparison, but are nevertheless valid and witness to the growing conscience of the Episcopal church, largely a white middle-class minority in America. But aside from the professedly Franciscan, others in the States are responding to the cry for the poor. A growing spirituality and humaneness move against materialism and complacency as the sense of community becomes apparent. This is often explicit as in the proliferation, a few years ago, of simple life-style groups and communities. Less obvious, but more deeply striking, is the growing sense some people feel that they should stand beside the poor and hope to receive as well as give.

The Saint of Assisi is acclaimed by the poor as friend and brother. But Francis was by birth and upbringing well-to-do and middle class; he was spoilt and ambitious, moody and fastidious. The miracle of his conversion and dedicated life holds challenge and incitement for those similarly disadvantaged; and offers the hope of reconciliation through the bond of shared fellowship, shared goods and shared freedom.

The Franciscan Missions of Hispanic California (1769-1834)

BY FATHER FRANCIS GUEST O.F.M.



The Spanish Crown

IN ACCORDANCE with their solemn, historic pledge to convert and Christianize the Indians of the Americas, the Spanish monarchs supported generously the missions conducted by religious orders throughout the empire. As a general rule, the royal government paid a thousand pesos for the establishment of each mission, the funds being used to buy vestments,

sacristy utensils, statuary, religious pictures, bells, musical instruments, livestock, agricultural equipment, and the like. In addition to all this, the state provided a salary for each missionary every year, the amount of money generally ranging, in New Spain, from 250 to 400 pesos. The missionaries found this benefaction useful in purchasing articles like clothing, books, medicine, and tobacco for themselves and in obtaining gifts, cloth, farm implements, and so forth for the Indians. Without this support from the Crown, the Church would never have been able to accomplish as much as she did among the aborigines of Spanish America. The Franciscan missions of Hispanic California, however, were financed by the Pious Fund, which consisted of contributions of money and land originally intended for the Jesuit missions of Lower California (1697-1767). After the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from Spanish dominions in 1767, these alms were applied by the royal government to the needs of the Dominican missionaries in Lower California and the Franciscans in Upper California.

On the other hand, the Spanish government found missions and missionaries useful from both political and economic points of view. In Florida and Georgia, for example, the numerous missions helped to keep out both the French and the English and to protect Spanish treasure fleets as they sailed north from Havana in the direction of the English colonies and then turned out into the Atlantic on their way to Spain. Missions in Texas made the northern frontier of New Spain that much more secure against possible intrusion by the French. Missions in Upper California were a valuable form of assistance to the Spanish presidial forces in checking the descent of Russia down the coast of the North Pacific. In time, these missions became the most abundant source of foodstuffs and other supplies for the troops in the presidios at San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco.

On the local scene the primary purposes of the Spanish missions, in any given locality, were religious and educational. In official royal declarations, the most important objective of the Crown in colonizing frontier areas was always the propagation of the faith. But, in a kind of *quid pro quo* translation, as it were, the king profited in significant political and economic ways from the achievements of the Church. He got his money's worth.

The California Missions

The term California, in the present context, means, geographically, the

American state of that name. In California, then, there were twenty-one missions in all. The first nine were established during the administration of the first Father President, Junípero Serra, 1769-1784. The second nine were founded by his successor in office, Father Fermín Francisco de Lasuén, 1785-1803. Next in chronological order came Santa Ynez in 1804, San Rafael in 1817, and San Francisco Solano in 1823.

Most of the missions are identified, in name and location, with urban centers, large or small, in California: San Diego, San Luis Rey, San Juan Capistrano, San Buenaventura (Ventura), Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, San Miguel, Carmel, Santa Cruz, San Juan Bautista, Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Rafael.

San Gabriel is a few miles from the center of Los Angeles. San Fernando is located in Mission Hills to the north of Los Angeles, Santa Ynez in Solvang, and La Purísima just outside of Lompoc. San Antonio is situated in a sparsely settled area near Hunter-Liggett army base. San Francisco Solano, the northernmost mission, is in Sonoma.

The largest of the missions in point of Indian population was San Luis Rey which, when at its peak, had slightly more than 2,000 inhabitants. Missions San Diego, San José, and Santa Barbara fell about 300 short of that number. Next in size came San Gabriel with about 1500, Santa Clara with around 1400, and San Buenaventura and San Juan Capistrano with 1300 each. At their height San Francisco, San Antonio, and San Juan Bautista had approximately 1200 Indians, while La Purísima, San Fernando, and San Miguel did not go much above a thousand. The smaller missions were Carmel at 800, Santa Ynez at 700, Nuestra Señora de la Soledad at 650, and Santa Cruz at 500.

The California Indians

The Indians along the California coast, like so many in northern New Spain, were hunters and gatherers who spent much of each day in a kind of interminable search for food. Totally unacquainted with the three-meal-a-day custom of western Europe, they partook of food at any hour of the day or night, whenever the urge to eat moved them. Under Junípero Serra it took from two to three months for a missionary to instruct the ordinary Indian adult in Christian doctrine, and during this period generous gifts of food had to be made available to the catechumens or there would not have been much schooling for them in the message of the Gospel. Logically, then, this need ultimately led, as it

had early on in the history of New Spain, to the mission structure as it is commonly known—fields of maize, wheat, and other grains; herds of cattle, sheep, and horses; and the mission quadrangle with the church occupying one side and, in the other three wings, living quarters for missionaries and guests, dormitories for unmarried Indian girls and, generally, for young men as well, rooms for granaries, and shops for the trades required to maintain large farms and ranches.

Language

The Indians along the California coast presented the missionaries with a problem in linguistics. The Franciscans counted eighteen languages spoken by the natives between San Diego and San Francisco, although some of the converts came from the San Joaquin Valley. Anthropologists distinguish between languages and dialects, of course, but they tell us that California was one of the regions of greatest linguistic diversity in the world. As early as 1774 Junípero Serra wrote that 'in none of the five missions which have already been founded, nor yet in those that we have in mind to establish shortly, are there any two where you will find the same language spoken.'

Catechetics

The friars made friends with the non-Christian Indians by being generous with gifts of food, bright-colored trinkets and adornments, and by cultivating the good will of Indian headmen and their families. And they solved the language problem by following the methods of Fray Pedro de Gante (Peter of Ghent), a Dutch lay brother who was one of the first three Franciscan missionaries to come to New Spain in 1523 to work among the Indians. In accordance with the example set by Fray Pedro, the padres attracted the brighter boys from each linguistic group at a given mission, devoting special attention to the sons of chiefs, taught them to sing religious songs in Spanish and Latin, and, through medium of the music, trained them in the basic elements of each language. The songs contained the teachings of the Church which the Indians, in preparing for baptism, would have to know. Documents show that many Indians, young and old, loved music and excelled in it. The boys, singing in their homes and among their relatives the songs they had learned from the missionaries, aroused general interest in the friars and their mission. Parents who saw their sons sparkle with all this new learning were won over to Christianity all the more easily. Looking upon the missionaries as the teachers of their children, they approached

them with greater respect. Other Indians, observing the progress made by the boys, wanted to learn in their turn. In time, the boys became choristers, altar servers, and catechists. In comparing Spanish with Indian terms, the youngsters became the instructors of the priests in their study of Indian languages. Ultimately the friars were able to work out a summary of Christian doctrine that could be used for daily recitation by the Indian converts. For a period of almost two years the great majority of the Indians baptized at any one of the first nine missions were children, some of tender age, some in or approaching their teens. Indian adults, in the first years of mission life in this early period, approached Christianity primarily through the influence of the children, the 'boy-catechists', as Serra was accustomed to call them.

Neophytes as Wards

The Spanish spoke of their converts as *neófitos*, a term which is commonly translated as neophytes and which means people who have been recently baptized or who have been recently converted to Christianity.

Eighteenth-century educators in western Europe, having no scientific means of measuring intelligence, commonly assumed that people of the upper classes were more abundantly gifted in the intellectual order than those in the lower brackets of society. Many Spaniards applied this principle in a special way to Indians who 'lived in the forest after the manner of wild animals'. Actually, the friars in California sometimes had occasion to differ, to some extent, in their estimate of the intelligence of the California Indians.

In addition to the question of intelligence, there were the many ways in which the Indians, to Spaniards from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, seemed to resemble children. The Spanish of the colonial period did not realize that anyone seems like a child in matters that are foreign to his culture. This is true not only of aboriginal people in the eyes of the civilized but also of the civilized in the eyes of aboriginals.

Putting these two principles together, one can understand why it was that Spanish law made the missionaries the legal guardians of their Indian converts. In embracing the faith and entering the Church, the Indian converts became, in Spanish law, the wards of the missionaries, who then stood to them as parents to children. The missionaries, then, had the obligations, not only of local pastors to the members of their church, but of parents toward the members of their family.

Required Residence

The neophytes were required by a Spanish law dating from 1604 to make their residence at the mission to which they were attached. The fundamental reasons for this law are rather obvious. For one thing, Hispanicization was an essential part of the royal program for Indian converts, who were expected to unlearn their Stone Age culture and replace it with Spanish culture. Secondly, the protracted catechumenate was an important feature of mission life. The neophytes recited their summary of Christian doctrine every day, once in their native language and once in Spanish. If the neophytes were to remain faithful to this exercise, they would have to reside at the mission. And thirdly, the Indians in their native habitat followed certain customs and observances that conflicted with Christian morality as the padres understood it: they practised divorce and re-marriage, allowed casual cohabitation, and avenged personal injury with death. Except for limited visits in sizeable groups to their native villages once or twice a year, then, the neophytes could not be allowed to expose themselves to the occasion of sin by returning home for a prolonged period of time, especially as individuals or in small groups, although the missionaries, if prudence permitted it, could make exceptions to this general principle. In large groups the Christians were more of a spiritual protection to one another.

Flight

There were many reasons why the neophytes tended at times to weary of mission life and to yearn once more for the ways of their ancestors. Here it will suffice to mention a few: the natural resistance of cultural patterns, centuries old, to radical change; the conflict between the regularity of mission routine and the inherent love for freedom in the Indian heart; the separation of Indian parents from children required to sleep in dormitories (an effort on the part of the missionaries on behalf of chastity and virginity in the young); the antipathy and discord between different linguistic groups of Indians at the same mission; the tendency of some Indians to abandon the mission in order to seek, in orgies, an outlet for their sexual drives. But the missionaries, laboring under the burden of parental obligation, invariably pursued their neophytes into the interior, either themselves, through other Indians, or by means of presidial troops, and returned them to the mission. The Indians evidently understood why they were supposed to remain at the mission, why they were pursued and brought back, and why the missionaries felt obliged to insist on the procedure they followed. In

some Indians conversion and spirituality sank deep. In others it remained closer to the surface of life.

Punishments

The principal faults of the neophytes at the missions were theft and concubinage. By theft the missionaries meant that the Indians, in their native culture, were accustomed to taking things from people who lived outside the tribal unit and had trouble adjusting to the Spanish concept of property rights. By concubinage the missionaries meant that some Indians, notwithstanding their conversion to Christianity, had a tendency to follow tribal marriage customs even though they lived at the mission. Punishments for these and other offenses were the whip, hobbles, or the stocks. The whip consisted of two strands of rope as a general rule. The hobbles and stocks, because they restricted the freedom the Indians loved, were especially onerous. One might have thought that these punishments would have alienated the Indians, one and all. And yet for many generations after the missions had been dissolved and discontinued, the descendants of the missionized Indians remained faithful to Catholicism. For example, of the 1,757 Luiseño Indians of Mission San Luis Rey, the great majority, in the neighborhood of ninety per cent, were described by anthropologists of the 1970s as practising Catholics. The dominant faith among the Yuma Indians of the San Diego area is still Roman Catholicism. In 1980 the great majority of the Chumash Indians on the Santa Ynez Reservation were Catholics. Robert Louis Stevenson, in *Across The Plains*, wrote a touching description of Ohlone Indians singing a High Mass in Latin around the year 1879 at Mission Carmel, which was then falling into ruins but has since been restored.

Diseases

At the California missions about eighty thousand Indians were baptized, although precision in this matter is not altogether easy to attain. When the missions were dissolved and discontinued in 1834 and the ensuing years (secularized is the term the Spanish-Mexican tradition employed), they had about 15,000 resident neophytes. But, from the earliest years on, disease took a heavy toll of the Indian population at the California missions. In all likelihood, venereal disease was communicated to the Indian population of the California coast by explorers of the sixteenth century. However that may be, this was the disease the friars regarded as most responsible for deaths among the

Indians, although it is prudent to remember that these priests were not bacteriologists. In any given year, once the missions began to develop, it was common for deaths to exceed births at any given mission. Actually, in the eighteenth century, it was more or less the rule for the death rate to exceed the birth rate in the larger cities of western Europe. The reasons for this condition are widely known.

Mission Buildings

In California mission churches, sandstone walls are often thick, and buttresses are thicker. In a land often scourged by earthquakes the padres built solidly. Since it was difficult at that time for a builder to calculate accurately how strong a given wall had to be to support a superstructure of a given weight, the Spanish overbuilt, as mission churches abundantly testify.

Transition

After the Mexican revolution broke out against Spain in 1810, the supply ships from San Blas on the west coast of New Spain discontinued their voyages to California. The Spanish settlements traded with visiting vessels when and as they could. The missions were almost the sole support of the presidios. After 1822 California came under Mexican government. By 1825 partial secularization of the missions had begun, the process being completed in 1834 and the following years.

Secularization

Secularization meant that the neophytes were to leave the missions and be embodied into Hispanic society, a procedure that entailed profound and far-reaching cultural problems for the missionized Indians. For one thing, they had no concept of the private ownership of land. For another, they had always been accustomed to tribal cooperation in their efforts to survive in the wilderness. Hence competition had always been frowned upon. And now they had no concept of competing with one another in cultivating the land that was distributed to them and in producing and selling commodities. A few were still well enough acquainted with aboriginal life to return to it and patch together something of the economy that had been part of their native culture. Some stayed on at the missions until economic decline compelled them to leave. Some moved to civilian enterprises, mainly farming and ranching. Some intermarried with Spaniards or Mexicans or (later) people of American culture.

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Francis and Today's Christian Conscience Movement

Reflections on Jim Wallis's visit to Britain in 1986

BY JEANNE HINTON



'AN INTENSE and often painful friendship.'¹ That is how Jim Wallis, one of America's most influential Christian leaders, has described his ongoing personal encounter with Francis of Assisi.

There are some similarities in their two stories. Francis was converted to the poor through his meeting of the leper by the roadside, and his sudden realisation that it was Jesus himself that he was meeting—Jesus in the face of the poor. The beginning of Jim Wallis's conversion to the poor came when he got to know black Christians in his home town of Detroit, USA, at a time in the sixties when, in Jim's words, Detroit was 'a tinderbox of racial hatred'. It was his first real encounter as a white middle-class American from a strict evangelical background with the other side of America—the injustices perpetrated against their own black people. For a time it turned him against the church—the church of white, middle-class America in which he had been raised—and which he saw to be part of the problem. But it was also to

lead him to finding Jesus in a new way: Jesus who is to be found among the poor, the naked, the homeless and the stranger.

Francis took the words of Jesus literally. The story is told of Francis that he opened the gospel three times at random. His eyes fell first on the words, 'If you will be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor.' A second time he read, 'Take nothing for your journey', and the third, 'If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up the cross, and follow me'. He then said to the brothers that were with him, 'Here is what we are going to do, and all those who shall afterward join us.' To Jim too the gospel message is a simple one. Indeed, he has said, 'I find the further I go along the simpler it gets . . . In particular, the message we need to hear is the simple truth that the gospel of Jesus Christ is good news to poor people.'²

That was the heart of the message that Jim Wallis preached when he came to Britain in June 1986 for a month long tour at the invitation of a broad coalition of British churches and Christian organisations. He had been invited specifically to help us in the process of relating the gospel of Jesus Christ to our own situation here in Britain. Implicit in that invitation was a recognition of the part that Jim Wallis and the Sojourners' Community in Washington D.C., of which he is a founder-member, have played in helping to rouse American Christians to take action alongside and on behalf of the poor and oppressed both within their own country and worldwide. In this article I would like to share with you some of the story that lies behind that invitation, some highlights of the month-long tour and what has resulted from it, and then to reflect further on the connections between the message of Francis and that which Jim brought to us.

Background

Part of the story behind the tour is that of the growing opposition of American Christians to many of the policies of the U.S. government, in particular its policies on defence and Central America and toward the poor at home and worldwide. As Editor of Sojourners' Magazine, Jim Wallis has been one of the catalysts and main spokespersons for that movement. In preaching the CMS Annual Sermon on 'The Rise of the Christian Conscience' at the beginning of the UK tour, Jim quoted the Assistant Secretary of State for inner American affairs, who said in April 1985, 'Taking on the churches is really tough. We don't normally think of them as opponents and we don't know how to handle them and

they have become really formidable.”³ ‘An independent movement of conscience and faith, whose cry for justice and whose appeal for peace is rooted in the Bible, rather than political ideology, is the hardest kind of movement to discredit, ignore, or accuse . . . Today, the powers-that-be and their religious co-conspirators have reason to be afraid of what is happening in the churches, because the renewal of Christian conscience is now a world-wide phenomenon . . .’,⁴ commented Jim.

In speaking of religious co-conspirators, Jim was referring to the rise of another religious movement in the United States, that of the religious right, a religious fundamentalism that sanctions war, racism, sexism and the domination of the rich over the poor. Despite this counter-movement, Jim spoke of his own belief that ‘we may be on the edge, in my country, of something very significant. Call it renewal, revival or conversion, clearly the Gospel is coming alive in new and unexpected ways and is being radically applied to our own situation. From many traditions and denominations a movement is afoot, unafraid to make biblical faith specific to our own circumstances, personal and public. Old divisions are breaking down, evangelism and social justice, prayer and peacemaking, spirituality and politics, worship and action, pastoral life and prophetic ministry, bible study and political analysis, solitude and community, all of these now are coming together for us.’⁵

It was against this background that the invitation to Jim was made. Those who invited him included missionary societies like CMS, aid agencies like Christian Aid and Traidcraft, evangelical organisations like the West Indian Evangelical Alliance, the Evangelical Coalition for Urban Mission, Evangelical Peacemakers and Frontier Youth Trust, and Christian peace groups like Christian CND and Pax Christi. The British churches were represented by the sponsorship of the British Council of Churches. From the start it was felt that the tour if it was to have any impact had to be ecumenical. Jim Wallis, it was recognised, was one of the few Christian leaders in the world today, who could be the means of drawing together such a wide and in some ways disparate group.

The tour itself

There were many memorable moments on the tour itself during which an estimated 20,000 people attended about 50 meetings. (I was one of the team of four that travelled with Jim). Undoubtedly, two events that stand out are the civic receptions that Jim received both in Scotland and Wales.⁶ Significantly, numbers attending these events were considerably

higher than regional planning groups had anticipated. In some places people queued to get into churches or halls, and in a few there were those who had to be turned away. Jim's message is not a popular one, he is not as well known by the average church member as by church leaders, and it was hard to gauge what the interest would be in the events planned. That the level of interest was mostly higher than anticipated indicates a growing strength in the Christian conscience movement here as elsewhere. Not only were the numbers higher than expected, the message of a costly discipleship in obedience to a radical gospel seemed in itself to meet a spiritual hunger in many of those who came. It was not only the breadth but the depth of response that touched Jim deeply, and that enabled him to complete his exhausting schedule.

One of the most exciting aspects of the whole tour was the coming together of the sponsoring networks which included in some places the black-led churches. This had not happened easily, either nationally or regionally, and in itself was indicative of the wide gap that exists between white and black-led churches in Britain, a gap that has its own painful history, rooted in the experiences of rejection by the white churches which many black Christians experienced when they first came here in the fifties. Jim was delighted when at the end of the tour the congregation itself became a kind of sermon. 'Last Saturday evening here in London when we were black and white together—more black than white for sure that night—young and old, men and women. That congregation gave me a vision for the future of the church in Britain; a church that would be a safe place and sanctuary for all who have been marginalised and excluded; that would be good news to the poor, indeed good news to all of us.'

What has been happening since

From the start those of us involved in organising the tour did not want it to result in the setting up of further organisations, committees or drafting of statements. We saw it primarily as strengthening what was already happening.

Jim's coming did strengthen local action, and in some places was a catalyst for new initiatives. In one region a group has become more involved in a local housing estate, in another several churches have come together and formed a credit union—a system for lending money at low interest rates and giving practical support to those in financial need, in others churches or groups of churches have become or are becoming

involved in Manpower Service Commission Schemes, either as a direct or indirect result of the tour. In a number of areas and some local churches justice and peace groups have been formed to explore the issues further and to consider appropriate action.

Without a doubt, one of the biggest outcomes overall has been the 'linking of people and networks'. Spokespersons for national organisations spoke of a definite change that Jim's visit had made in 'moving things along', 'creating a climate', 'sharpening the issues'. Of the latter, the issue of the relationships between white and black-led churches remains a primary one. 'This was not a new agenda for us,' commented one member of the national steering committee of his organisation, 'but it has heightened our concern. It has led to our looking carefully at racism within our own organisation, and to spending time with leaders of black-led churches in an attempt to begin to understand how they see us, and to our coming to understand their agenda, not impose ours on them.'

As for Jim's preaching and speaking, I was interested to come across an article in *Christian Action Journal*, written by Canon John Austin, Secretary of the London Diocesan Board for Social Responsibility. He had heard Jim at a meeting in the East End of London, and had listened to Jim's analysis of the problems of the inner city. Part of this analysis had been an understanding 'that the Ghetto is the solution to a problem facing the powerful, affluent communities of America. Just as the Homelands of South Africa are the solution to the problem of what white South Africa does with its excess black population—move them away—so the Ghetto is what powerful, affluent America does with the problem of its excess labour. It keeps them there in the Ghetto where they are marginalised, neglected or forgotten until they are needed, or until the Ghettos erupt.' The church then comes in, said Jim, to 'provide the social services to alleviate the most acute distress. But these services change nothing'. John Austin's comment was, 'Most of us found this analysis too difficult to respond to immediately, but it has been with me ever since'.⁷

About our own situation here in Britain Jim was reticent to say overmuch. He had not come to tell us what to do. He shared his own beliefs—that proximity to the poor is a necessary spiritual discipline for affluent, middle-class Christians, one that can free us from our own poverty trap; that opposition to the nuclear arms race is a primary matter of faith for Christians today; that nurturing bonds of friendship

between individuals and networks nationally and internationally is essential in order to build strength for the long path ahead. The path ahead he saw to be a costly one.

The way ahead

What moves us to take the next steps along such a path? For me most often it has been the example of other Christians that I have met or read about. Jim records just such an experience in his book *The New Radical*. It concerns Francis of Assisi.

'It wasn't until a few years ago, when I had the rare commodity of a free evening, that I had my first real exposure to Francis. *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*, the movie produced by Franco Zefferelli, was playing for a dollar at our local cheap movie theater on a double bill.'

'I was completely unprepared for my first meeting with the saint . . . I left the theater stunned and speechless. On the way home in the dark car, I quietly began to weep. Never before had I encountered a life so consumed with the gospel, a man so on fire with the love of God, a disciple so single-mindedly focused on following after Jesus, a spirit so joyful in abandoning everything to serve his Lord. The evangelical poverty of Francis had evangelized me to the depths of my soul.'

'It's so easy to be a "radical Christian" in America. Here the church is so affluent, so comfortable, so lukewarm that the most basic kind of discipleship or the simplest acts of justice, mercy and peace seem extraordinary by comparison. Living what should be just an ordinary Christian life is enough to be designated radical by a spiritually impoverished church.'

'It is a constant temptation to accept the designation and, worse yet, to allow the American church to become the standard by which we measure ourselves. For Francis, the standard was always Christ, and Christ alone, not the thirteenth-century church, nor even the movement of renewal that he founded'.⁵

Strangely, such examples of obedience to Christ can put us also in touch with desires deep within us to know God in this way, and to live more authentic Christian lives. I say strangely because who wants to take steps that might lead to one's own economic impoverishment or even imprisonment? That however can be the cost as Jim and the Sojourners' Community have discovered. But it was just this hunger in

people that we met on the tour that moved me most. 'I could see it in their eyes...', Jim repeated often after he had preached. It's why I believe that here in Britain too the Christian conscience movement will increasingly gain momentum.

Notes

1. Jim Wallis, *The New Radical*, p.163. Lion Paperbacks, 1983.
2. Interview *GrassRoots*, Sept./Oct. 1986.
3. CMS Annual Sermon 1986.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. In spite of the fact that Jim Wallis has served several prison sentences in the U.S. for civil disobedience in public demonstrations against the buildup of nuclear arms.
7. *Christian Action Journal*, Spring 1987.
8. Jim Wallis, *The New Radical*, p.163.

Jeanne Hinton was formerly Editor of GrassRoots Magazine (now CHRISTIAN) she works freelance as a writer and running small conferences and workshops on Christian growth and discipleship.

Iscariot

Fettered he was, a dozen generations
before his birth, with steel-hard
chains forged in prophetic fires;
fate's paradox, whose base desires,
from which for him was no escape,
warred fiercely with the deepest love.
For love it surely was that drew
him so to follow Love, to shape
his yearning for an earthly king
in gentler mould, just for a day.

A man who'd sell his very soul
for a mess of silver coins, you'd say,
is not worth a fleeting thought.
He took the bread, and turned his back
on gift and giver; this,
betrayal was, before the kiss.
Yet, if he had not gone into the night
would we walk now as children of the light?
Holy Week, '81

SISTER MICHAELA C.S.Cl.

Song of Clare

For light I was named—Chiara—
for flower's face
and wing of bird, stars,
and Love's own grace.

Name above names is my joy,
the Christ who came
and lived in love on earth
life without blame.

Without your love, oh Love,
I cannot live—
so all that now is mine
to you I give.

Yet what is really mine?
The very air
I breathe is yours alone;
the flesh I wear

ever was your gift.
My heart afire
burns only with your flame
with no desire

but to be consumed.
Yours is the light
by which my blind eyes see
this world so bright

in all its loveliness.
The words I sing
come from your voice.
No offering

in this my poverty I make
save that poor thought
that from my nothingness
Heaven is wrought.

And if your fire, your light were gone
I still would pray
in absence, in the deepest night,
Love's dark way.

11.8.82 SISTER MICHAELA C.S.Cl.

Pentecost in Westgate Fields

Gold and green
The leaves are seen;
For me His glory mean,
Plain for all to see.

Gold and green;
A gentle Breeze
Through the trees,
Each bough and leaf
Alive with life.
'Tis our belief
He's moving here today.

This gentle wind through leaf and bough
Reminds me how
He's ever present,
Here and now.
He'll lead me if I quiet stay;
My name I'll hear him say,
And feel His loving touch.
Then responsive to the Spirit's leading
Go his way,
All the day,
Day by day.

There's a quiet constant fluttering
Your Holy Spirit muttering Your love;
And Your beseeching us,
Mid toil and strife,
Assures us of the Spirit's life
About us and within.

Sometimes a gust so strong;
Not for long,
But to us Lord, Your power at work,
Your bidding most emphatic.
A simple call, and yet dramatic.

When back to town and normal task
To know your prompting, guiding Spirit
Still we daily ask
And following through your strengthening power,
Hour by hour
To do Your loving will;
To give ourselves in thankful joy and love,
In praise of Him who reigns above,
Our God of Love.

21.5.86

MADELINE RUDDOCK

Books

Praying the Kingdom

Towards a Political Spirituality. By *Charles Elliott*. D.L.T. 1985. £3.50.

How many respectable Christians, seeing this book in a bookshop, or on a church bookstall will see the subtitle, and allow their glance to move quickly on, not wanting their praying and devotion polluted by politics?

If they do react like that, then they will have missed a treasure house for, in this relatively short book they will find a stimulus to their prayers and meditations, and a challenge to their lifestyle and assumptions. Yet this is no cheap political diatribe but a book about prayer, about deep meditation on scripture. This book takes us into the heart of Jesus's teaching about the Kingdom, and helps us face the full challenge of a message which has personal, communal, national and international implications, political implications.

The central core of the book consists of a series of marvellous meditation exercises on the Kingdom, which can be used by individuals or groups. This is preceded by a

discussion of the way in which approaching the bible as a 'story' can be more helpful for praying scripture, than an analytical approach which can divert attention away from the meaning of the story into questions of historical accuracy. The final section feeds the insights and challenges of the whole book into a discussion of the Eucharist and the social and political implications of taking bread and wine.

An immensely stimulating book which will not let us rest content with a cosy non-controversial spirituality and lifestyle, but pushes us into facing that threatening side of Jesus's message which made people conspire against him and kill him. It raises one question above all others. Is our Christianity such that it challenges, threatens and creates hostility as Christ did, or is it so conformist and non-controversial that Pilate and Caiaphas would have given it their seal of approval?

S. GEORGE'S, CROSBY,
SCUNTHORPE

GORDON SLEIGHT

Fascinating Collection

Lent for Busy People. Edited by *Shelagh Brown*, The Bible Reading Fellowship, 1987. £2.95.

If you did not discover this book in time to use it during Lent, make sure that you get it and have it ready for next time. Shelagh Brown planned the scheme she wanted for the Bible readings, and then asked a galaxy of well known people to choose their favourite readings and to comment on them in an interview. The result is a fascinating collection which makes a powerful personal impact, and cannot fail to help people in discipleship and in relationship with God. The first three days of Lent are most poignant, for the author is Terry Waite and his subject is liberation, based on readings from Isaiah 61. By a brilliant

editorial decision, these three were reprinted as a single article in *The Times* a couple of days after the news of his disappearance. But other contributions are often moving and illuminating, for again and again the reader is given glimpses into the personal religion of these people who have become household names through their service to humanity and through religious broadcasting. There is Lord Tonypantry (George Thomas), who tells us that, as he went in solemn procession as Speaker of the House of Commons, 'in my mind and in my heart I was waiting upon God.' Others interviewed include Dame Cicely Saunders.

Rabbi Lionel Blue, Mother Frances Dominica, Archbishop Derek Warlock, not to mention the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, other famous people and some more ordinary people, all of them very busy people and all of them with

something to say to you and the other busy people for whom this book is intended. Shelagh Brown provides the Sunday readings herself with good theology, practical realism and a light touch.

BARNABAS S.S.F.

Gospel and Environment

Our World, God's World. Reflections for Advent and the Christmas Season on the Environment. *By Barbara Wood.* 103pp B.R.F. £2.50.

As one who was forced by Schumacher's 'Small is Beautiful' to think not just about the environment but also about such things as Peace, the new work ethic and the Third World, a mixture of ideas more often associated with the supposedly secular Green Movement than with Christianity, I was intrigued to read this 'religious' book written by his daughter, Barbara Wood. Despite the cover-picture showing a dead tree, the subject matter is far wider than merely about conserving the world's natural environment. If her father's book is a classic in all sorts of circles, this book may be a sign that Christians are beginning to take 'green' issues seriously at last.

The environmental implications of the Gospel have been remarkably slow to affect our Christian lifestyles. Sometimes those who lead the way put the rest off by overzealousness. However Mrs. Wood should not frighten off ordinary British Christians. Her personality comes through

as that of a mother who is concerned about her children's future world and who has a lively, lifestyle changing faith. e.g. 'Everyday decisions can lead to new opportunities to meet God. I found a new freedom in more senses than one when I realised that car exhausts damage the environment and decided to walk or cycle whenever possible ... I have a new opportunity to talk to my children as we walk to school each day. The joy and gratitude I feel becomes a prayer.' (p.58).

The book is designed to be used daily at Advent and Christmas any year, but could be used any time. It follows no lectionary, so could be used ecumenically. Each day gives a passage, printed in full from the Jerusalem Bible (unfortunately not from the recently published second edition), the reflection, a short prayer and sometimes a memorable environmental fact or statistic; however these seem secondary to the main purpose of the book.

JACOB S.S.F.

Guide to Prayer

Learning to Pray. *By Evan Pilkington.* Darton Longman and Todd. £2.50.

This is at first sight yet another book about prayer, and one is bound to ask the question as to whether we need one, in view of the copious collection already available, unless there it has something startlingly original to say. Yet there is a directness and readability about this book which commends itself, and clearly the author is himself a man of prayer to whom we should be more than grateful for his

willingness to share his treasure with us.

Some years ago (I think that it was in 1976) Canon Evan Pilkington conducted a retreat at Hilfield Friary, and his ability to teach simply and clearly lessons of real spiritual depth became clear to all. It is good to have a guide to prayer written by so great an authority.

This is the kind of book which can be placed in the hands of a beginner in the art

of prayer, and since most of us have progressed but little down this road it will be of enormous help to many more experienced people.

He emphasises that people should pray in the way best suited to them, and that we all differ. But he writes that contemplative prayer is the best way for many people today, and specially those who are very busy, 'although they do not realise it until they try'. Chapter 6, entitled *Through Silence* is particularly worth careful study. His advice to those who experience real

difficulties in prayer is most helpful, and his frankness is to be appreciated (e.g. when he says: 'You are bored with it...').

There is a useful postscript on corporate prayer, and one's only regret is that this final chapter is not longer, though much of real value is packed into the space of four pages.

This small book deserves to become one of the classics in the realm of spirituality and it is to be hoped that it will be widely read.

MARTIN S.S.F.

Multum in Parvo

Celebrating Women. Edited by Janet Morley and Hannah Ward.

Women in Theology and Movement for the Ordination of Women, 1986, reprinted 1987.

44pp. £1.50. (Obtainable from MOW, Napier Hall, Hide Place, Vincent St.,

London SW1P 4NJ or Holy Trinity House, Orsett Terrace, London W2 6AH).

This booklet is both unusual and attractive to look at—even if you don't like Michaelangelo's Creation trans-sexualized. The title is richly ambiguous, but perhaps you should think first of the celebrating women as the subject rather than the object of the participle. Though there is pain and anger in this collection, the celebratory tone prevails, a cheering thought if one is approaching the dreaded 'feminist' issues with misgivings. This is an anthology of material for worship, and exploration of ways in which women can find expression

for approaches to God and to aspects of God's being that have mostly been submerged in overwhelmingly masculine imagery and style. We tend to be side-tracked and then trapped in the linguistic problems; this collection, varied in form, ecumenical in authorship, offers some idea of the missing dimensions whose expression might better enable both men and women to worship 'in spirit and in truth'. There is much in little here.

JENNIFER FRANCES C.S.Cl.

Spiritual Classic

The Divine Pity. By Gerald Vann, O.P. Collins, Fount Paperbacks. 191pp. £1.75.

It is fascinating that at a time when some academic theologians appear to be able to believe while not believing things which are considered by many Christians to be crucial to our faith, this book, first printed in 1945, has been reprinted. It brings together The Beatitudes which are "the central core of Christ's moral teaching", and the Sacraments which are the central channels of grace within the Church's tradition and practise.

In the introduction to the new edition Simon Tugwell, O.P., describes the author as being "not a specially original thinker" but one who like most of us was "a human being torn between the desire to achieve great things ... and the painfulness and futility of life as it actually is". For all who feel this description applies to them, whether already claiming to be a Christian or not, this book is a 'must'. The publisher's note on the cover describes it as "a great

classic", and this is true; probably because it is centred on Jesus, on his Gospel teaching, and on the life which can be achieved through one's commitment to both. It is also true I think that this is why a

book written forty years ago is still as stimulating, as fresh and as challenging as it must have been then for all who read it.

ANGELO S.S.F.

Popular Spokesman

C. S. Lewis: The Man and his Achievement. By John Peters.
The Paternoster Press, £4.95.

It is twenty-three years since C. S. Lewis died. It is said that the Narnia stories are now most read, and still the *Screwtape Letters* and *A Grief Observed*. In recent years there has been a revival of interest in him, increased by the film *Shadowlands*. Walter Hooper goes on and on, bringing out books of articles Lewis once wrote for the *Spectator* and *Time and Tide*. Before this we had appreciations, guides to his thought, varied impressions and an excellent biography by Green and Hooper. John Peters felt the need for a 'cool and sober re-assessment of his intrinsic value and interest, for a world twenty years on from his death.'

Peters gives good assessments of the books he mentions. He thinks of Lewis as an evangelist, and 'since the end of the 1940's, without question the most famous

and popular spokesman for Christianity throughout the English-speaking world'.

After mention of his imaginative work, including science fiction, and his more reasoned broadcast talks and books, John Peters goes on to devote a chapter to the letters written with Lewis' own hand. Letter-writing occupied such a proportion of Lewis' time that this chapter is justified. The collection of letters, of which those to his friend Greeves form the largest volume, are a revealing and often inspired part of Lewis' total contribution.

This book will not astonish the long-time C. S. Lewis enthusiast. For him it will provide a text-book, and good material for revision. It is recommended to the average reader, who wants straightforward information and advice.

RICHARD S.S.F.

Searching and Forgiving

Our Father: meditations of the Lord's Prayer. By Ruth Burrows.
Darton, Longman and Todd. £1.95. ISBN 0-232-51684-7

Ruth Burrows has proved her ability to communicate essential Christian truths and insights. Having followed S. Teresa in a look at the *Interior Castle*, she now follows her again in turning her attention to the Lord's Prayer. The introduction, a reprint of an article in *The Way*, makes very clear that prayer is not a 'special activity in life, an art that can be taught or learned', an examination subject in which we pass or fail, but a relationship with one who loves us and whose activity underlies our own.

'When we search for him in the scriptures, we have already found him. He is with us at a level we do not perceive and cannot perceive'. There are moments when I am conscious of this book as distinctively Carmelite in its tone and its emphasis on nothingness and emptiness, but the central truths are the same for all of us.

The point at which I feel bound to raise a question is her treatment of the image of God as Father. She says that 'never to have experienced parental affection, while it

may leave a lifelong emotional void, need be no barrier to surrendering confidently to our Father in heaven. We do not have to seek an answer in human testimony... We have then no excuse'. I have far less experience than Ruth Burrows, but even I have come across far too many people with not simply a *lack* of experience of parental care but a negative experience of a relationship with a father which has left a much more positive blockage than her words suggest. She is, of course, not talking about the emotional reaction, but I wonder if she does justice to the extent to which emotional reaction to a relationship seen e.g. simply in terms of overbearing power can limit a person's ability to grasp even the *idea* of a loving Father. For me the image of God as Father is a natural one: I cannot be

confident that things are so straightforward for everyone else. It seems that many people need to bring their feelings to the surface in order to deal with them and grow through them. It would be a pity if anyone thought an inability to follow this austere carmelite path was blameworthy: there *are* many mansions in our Father's house.

Perhaps a quotation will both endorse this, in Ruth Burrows' own words, and also convey something of the quality of the short paragraphs, easy to linger on, which make up the book: 'What we are asked to forgive is nothing more or less than that people are 'other'—not me, different from me, with a whole range of different patterns of thinking, reacting'.

A SISTER C.S.Cl.

Trinitarian Spirituality

Alone with God. By Jean Holl. Triangle. £2.25. ISBN 0-281-04228-4

What do you do in your quiet time? This book suggests a wide and rich range of ideas which are intended for practical use and not just informed reading.

The format of the book is straightforward—a chapter usually consisting of several related topics, followed by ideas for practice, a prayer and then notes which frequently include other books for further reading. Such a format is ideal for quick reference.

The book is intended for newcomers to Christian discipleship and those who are perpetual beginners. After a general introduction, pointers are given as to where and when, and necessary basic attitudes, the primary one being faith.

Next, to whom do we respond? In our quiet times we experience a relationship with God the Father, through his Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jean Holl emphasises this trinitarian spirituality.

The following chapters go on to examine various elements which may compose a

quiet time—praise and worship, prayer, and the study of scripture. Here, for those who need more fundamental ABC instructions for spiritual exercises in these areas, *Saddhana: a way to God* by Anthony de Mello is highly recommended as a supplement.

For a relationship to grow and deepen, communication must be two way. Aspects of listening and hearing God speak are examined.

Finally discipleship is not easy. There are times when it is necessary to withdraw from the daily scene and reaffirm our love and commitment to God. Then, from the subject of retreats, the book looks forward to activity—'Be doers of the word and not hearers only' (James 1.22). For a short book this manages to include many of the features of Christian living such as fellowship, spiritual reading, bible study and prayer in its diverse forms. These elements form part of the daily pattern of life in a contemplative community, and I

found it a humbling experience to realize and remember that for many of my brothers and sisters in Christ, these components must be balanced within a daily quiet time which may be as short as

half an hour.

It is hoped that the style of expression and the fact that the book was written for Christian women will not be off-putting.

A SISTER C.S.Cl.

Seeking After God

The Names of Christ. By Luis de Leon.

SPCK Classics of Western Spirituality. £12.50.

This addition to the series fills a gap among the Spanish classics easily available in English. Allison Peers described *The Names of Christ* as one of Spain's great prose classics, so this edition provides a chance for English readers to have a more complete picture of Spain's 'golden age'. Luis de Leon did not know St Teresa personally but was involved in work on her manuscripts and in preserving them and their message.

Like St Teresa, Luis wrote this work in the vernacular, and he defends this in his *Dedication*, for it was unusual for a learned man to use it. His emphasis on immanence and his love of nature ('Christ dwells in the countryside') are in harmony with this valuation of the language of everyday. The treatise takes the form of a dialogue: a

literary convention, but one which allows some attempt at naturalness in the conversation. He *was* learned, however, and his Renaissance learning is brought into a synthesis here. Peers described his doctrine as 'markedly active' and among the numerous Fathers whom he quotes is Gregory of Nyssa with whom he shares the idea of endless seeking after God for 'the delight that you create in our souls is a pleasure without end, one that gets progressively sweeter and more intense, a desire never sated, for as it has been said, whoever drinks from your sweetness, the more he drinks the thirstier he becomes'. The numerous names for Christ which are expounded here suggest some of this richness which can lead us on and on.

A SISTER C.S.Cl.

Common Life

Life in Christ. By Graham Leonard.

Mowbray's Popular Christian Paperbacks. 93 pp. £2.50.

Anyone who reads Church newspapers has heard of Graham Leonard, Bishop of London. He is either a hero in the eyes of those who agree with his stand and value his guidance, or he is accused of being a reactionary by those who think that he is thwarting progress. Many of those who know him as a person say that his greatest gifts are those of a pastor, and that he has become something of a reluctant controversialist because of developments that he feels in conscience that he must oppose.

But if you are expecting partisan arguments in this book you will be surprised and perhaps disappointed. For here we have a book of real spirituality, teaching us about the love of God and of our response which is to live in so close a fellowship with our Lord so that every department of our lives is subject to him. The implications are spelt out as to what is meant by the common life of the Body of Christ, his Church, with the reminder that the part of the Church which is still on earth is the smallest part.

The author's consciousness of our being one with the communion of saints causes him to quote with approval a passing remark of an eastern Christian at a meeting: 'Only last week, Maximus the Confessor was saying to me...' Now Maximus lived 1,400 years ago! But he is alive in Christ, and he still speaks through his writings.

In Chapter 5, *The Mind of a Christian*, the author writes of the importance of the Bible in enabling us to apprehend the

revelation of God, saying that we can best interpret the message of each separate book that it contains by trying to ascertain the meaning that it had when the Church accepted it as part of the Canon of Scripture. This is indeed helpful advice.

Lovers of the prayers of the late Eric Milner-White will be grateful that there are quotations from his beautiful selection in *My God, My Glory* reprinted here for devotional use.

MARTIN S.S.F.

Episcopal Wisdom

HALF WAY. Reflections in Midlife. By Jim Thompson, Bishop of Stepney.

Collins Fount Paperbacks, 220 pp. £2.50.

This looks like quite a small book, but it has an enormous amount packed into it, and should not be just read through like a novel. Its wisdom is available to anyone honest enough to admit to the experiences which it encompasses, and it is written with great sensitivity and a wonderfully light touch. Time and time again, the cap fits.

The reviewer thinks of himself as vaguely middle aged, and was shocked to find that

midlife began at forty (a while ago)—nonetheless his immaturity enables him to find the book appropriate to his needs. You don't have to be in your forties to profit from it.

If you have attained that magic age and find that somehow life has gone wrong, and you are looking for a guide—here it is!

ANSELM S.S.F.

Teaching Material

Preaching on Devotional Occasions. By D. W. Cleverley Ford. A. R. Mowbray & Co.

149pp. £4.75.

In the introduction to this volume the author states that there is generally considered to be a difference between the devotional address as presented in situations like Retreat, or Quiet Days, and the sermon which is preached in the setting of liturgical worship; but that 'precisely what is the difference is not clear'. He then asks the reader to 'be prepared for variety in style' as he describes the settings where these preachments were carried out. Each milieu is different, as is each congregation, and yet there is a sameness about all the addresses (or sermons) which is perhaps due to the very singular style of the preacher.

Each meditation has excellent teaching

material within it; the illustrations are good, and usually linked to some very topical event or person, but their general presentation (every one of them is too long), does not exactly move this reviewer to meditational prayer or contemplation. They are provocative and at times stimulating but one cannot help wondering if the title words 'on Devotional Occasions' is not a misnomer, while recognising that no address ever sounds the same when being preached as it does to the 'inner ear' when being read. One cannot help wondering also if there might be some richer content in terms of devotional stimulus if there were rather more use of scripture and not quite so many personal

allusions and impressions.

But Canon Cleverley Ford has obviously written a number of such books in the series for this publisher, so one assumes he

must be fairly widely read. That being so, those people who liked his previous efforts will no doubt like, and buy this one.

ANGELO S.S.F.

Clarity

Firmly I Believe and Truly. By *Graham Leonard*.

Mowbray's Popular Christian Paperbacks, 91 pp. £1.95.

Bishop Graham takes lines from the famous hymn by John Henry Newman to express his faith and belief in the living God who has revealed himself to us as love and whom man is created to adore in love.

The first few chapters on the Trinity, manhood taken by the Son and manhood crucified, are particularly good. The remaining chapters concentrate on the grace which comes from life in Christ, Holy Church, and adoration, and emphasise the experience of God in worship, sacrament

and prayer.

In a small book the bishop handles big themes. Many may welcome and appreciate the clarity with which he sets out his own belief—but for me it seemed to lack the joy which is ours because we are loved by such a God who reveals himself to us in Jesus Christ who died for us, and it is to this God and in this joy that we owe our allegiance and come to adore and worship.

BENEDICT SSF

Books Received

Ann Griffiths: *The Furnace & The Fountain*, by *A. M. Allchin*, Univ. Wales Press; **Believing The Bible**, by *David Winter*, Mowbrays; **Creative Prayer**, *Anthony Bloom*, D.L.T.; **Day Trips to Eternity**, by *Lionel Blue*, D.L.T.; **Essays on the Kingdom of God**, ed. *J. H. L. Rowlands*, S. Michael's College, Llandaff; **Faith or Fear**, ed. *Michael Jacobs*, D.L.T.; **From Papua with Love**, by *Blanche Biggs*, Privately Printed; **God in our Hands**, by *Graham Shaw*, S.C.M. Press; **Images of Holiness**, by *Philip Sheldrake S.J.*, D.L.T.; **Jesus Risen**, by *Gerald O'Collins*, D.L.T.; **Life and Love**, by *K. Kelly*, Collins; **Praying Through Paradox**, by *Charles Elliott*, Fount; **Reform & Division in the Franciscan Order (1296-1538)**, by *Duncan Nimmo*, Capuchin Historical Institute, Rome; **Terry Waite: Man with a Mission**, by *Trevor Barnes*, Fontana Paperbacks; **The Measure of Mission**, by *B.M.U.*, Board of Mission & Unity; **The Joy of Being**, by *John Main O.S.B.*, D.L.T.; **Tradition Renewed**, ed. *Geoffrey Rowell*, D.L.T.; **Women & Early Christianity**, by *Susanne Heine*, S.C.M. Press.

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CHRISTOPHER S.S.F.



The late Sister Gwenda Mary C.S.Cl.

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